

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1883

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide greater access for residents of frontier areas to the healthcare services provided by community health centers.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 18, 2003

Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. THOMAS, and Mr. CRAIG) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide greater access for residents of frontier areas to the healthcare services provided by community health centers.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Frontier Healthcare
5 Access Act of 2003”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

7 (a) Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) People who live in frontier areas are medi-
2 cally underserved and face unique challenges in ac-
3 cessing affordable healthcare.

4 (2) People who live in frontier areas are more
5 likely to lack health insurance than other rural and
6 urban citizens.

7 (3) Frontier areas generally do not have popu-
8 lation centers that can support the full range of
9 healthcare services available in most urban and some
10 rural areas.

11 (4) Community health centers play an impor-
12 tant role in providing health services to many medi-
13 cally underserved areas and populations.

14 (5) Many frontier areas do not have community
15 health centers.

16 (6) Many frontier areas cannot currently qual-
17 ify for community health centers because the Fed-
18 eral definition of medically underserved areas or
19 populations does not appropriately or effectively rec-
20 ognize the unique nature and needs of frontier areas
21 and those who live in them.

22 (7) Any definition of frontier areas for purposes
23 of eligibility for Federal or State healthcare pro-
24 grams should look beyond simple measures of popu-
25 lation density to consider such factors as the dis-

1 tance from and travel time to the nearest significant
2 healthcare service center or market.

3 (8) President George W. Bush has made the
4 development of new community health centers a pri-
5 ority of his administration.

6 (9) People who live in frontier areas should be
7 included explicitly in this expansion of the commu-
8 nity health center program.

9 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to pro-
10 vide greater access for residents of frontier areas to the
11 healthcare services provided by community health centers.

12 **SEC. 3. FRONTIER COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS.**

13 Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42
14 U.S.C. 254b) is amended—

15 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “and resi-
16 dents of public housing” and inserting “residents of
17 public housing, and residents of frontier areas”;

18 (2) by redesignating subsections (j), (n), (o),
19 (p), (q), (r), (s), (q), and (s) as subsections (k), (l),
20 (m), (n), (o), (p), (q), (r), and (s), respectively; and

21 (3) by inserting after subsection (i), the fol-
22 lowing:

23 “(j) RESIDENTS OF FRONTIER AREAS.—

24 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may award
25 grants for the purposes described in subsections (c),

(e), and (f) for the planning and delivery of services to areas identified under paragraph (3)(B).

“(2) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—A grant awarded under this subsection shall be expended to supplement, and not supplant, the expenditures of the health center and the value of in-kind contributions for the delivery of services to the population described in paragraph (1).

“(3) DEFINITION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—In this subsection, the term ‘frontier area’ means a county or a rational area identified by the Secretary in consultation with appropriate State offices of rural health.

“(B) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall through regulations develop a definition to identify frontier areas and shall designate residents of such areas as medically underserved for purposes of this section. In developing such definition the Secretary shall consider factors such as population density, distance in miles from the nearest significant healthcare service center or market, and travel time in minutes from the

- 1 nearest significant healthcare service center or
- 2 market.”.

